



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Rural Development Energy Grant Opportunities for Ag Producers and Small Businesses

Holdrege, Neb., Dec. 23, 2005 –Ag producers and small businesses are encouraged to attend the January 4th informational meeting to discuss energy opportunities available via the Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements grant program. Twin Valleys Public Power District, the City of Holdrege and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development will host the meeting at the Phelps County Ag Center, 1308 2nd Avenue in Holdrege. Ag producers' portion of meeting is from 10:00 a.m. to noon, with business segment from noon to 1:30 p.m.

Meeting is highly recommended to all ag producers and small businesses who are wanting to apply for energy type projects. Attendees will become familiar with the energy program's eligibility requirements and will be guided through the application process.

Funds can be utilized for a wide range of projects; such as irrigation projects, motor upgrades, HVAC, lighting, windows/doors, insulation and a variety of other energy saving projects as well as wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, hydrogen renewable projects. Residential improvements are not eligible.

USDA Rural Development awarded \$418,348 in energy grants to Nebraska recipients in Fiscal Year 2005 assisting in 36 energy efficiency improvements projects and 1 renewable energy project. Section 9006 of the 2002 Farm Bill established the USDA Rural Development Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements grant program. Since the program's inception, Nebraska has received nearly \$778,000 for 57 energy projects.

For further information contact Karissa Hagedorn, business and cooperative specialist, USDA Rural Development, (308) 237-3118 x4 or karissa.hagedorn@ne.usda.gov; Corey ten Bensel, Alma area coordinator, Twin Valleys Public Power District, (308) 697-3315 or cmtenbe@twinvalleysppd.com; or Dave Hunter, City of Holdrege, (308) 995-8681.

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